

**Rais: Bigger problem with Muslims if Erykah Badu concert allowed**  
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**By Melissa Chi**

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 28 — Datuk Seri Rais Yatim justified on Twitter today the cancellation of Erykah Badu's concert, which was scheduled to take place tomorrow, saying that if the concert had been allowed to go ahead, it would have created "a bigger and prolonged problem".

"The 'Allah' graphic on the singer's body will surely create religious controversies among Muslims who do not appreciate such practice.

"The cancellation of the concert is based on justification, if continued, will create a bigger and prolonged problem," he said in a post on the micro-blogging site this afternoon.

The information, communications and culture minister had earlier today announced on his official Twitter page that the concert has been banned after a photograph revealing a tattoo on the American R&B singer with the Arabic word for "Allah", or God, appeared in English-language daily The Star yesterday.

"The act of showing the 'Allah' symbol and 'Nabi Muhammad SAW' for entertainment purposes is unacceptable by Muslims," Rais said on Twitter.

Rais (picture) said the concert was "violating Puspal guidelines, under religious sensitivity and Malaysian values".

Puspal is the central agency for filming and performance permits, which falls under Rais's portfolio.

When contacted earlier, event organiser Pineapple Concerts Sdn Bhd declined to comment.

Yesterday, three top editors from the local English daily were hauled up by the Home Ministry over the publication of a photograph of the American singer.

The Star published a photograph of Badu with two tattoos with the Arabic word for 'Allah', or God, in a profile piece in the Star2 entertainment section.

Some Muslim groups have said Badu is not a good role model for young Malaysians because of the tattoos.

AP reported that an information ministry official said a government committee decided today to ban the concert because Badu has "offended the religious sensitivities" of Muslims by posing with such tattoos.

He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to make public statements.

The Star published an apology today.

It is understood that the American R&B singer is already in town and had been promoting tomorrow's concert in interviews to local media.

After Malaysia, Erykah is scheduled to perform in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority country.

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